

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 DRC-01 EUR-10 NSC-07 NSCE-00 PM-03

L-02 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 MC-02 ACDA-10

OMB-01 SAM-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 /070 W

----- 125730

O 311537Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9870

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

CINCEUR IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T MADRID 5493

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MASS, SP, AG, MO

SUBJECT: TANK DELIVERIES TO MOROCCO

REF MADRID 5484

1. MFA DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE AND NEAR EAST (LOPEZ AGUIRBENGEOA) CALLED IN POL COUNSELOR AT 1300 LOCAL AUG 30 TO INFORM HIM THAT INFORMATION EMBASSY HAD GIVEN PREVIOUS DAY TO MFA AND MILITARY MINISTRIES RE TANK DELIVERIES (REFTEL) HAD BEEN PASSED TO FONMIN AT LA CORUNA (WHERE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WAS MEETING.) FONMIN SUBSEQUENTLY INSTRUCTED UNDERSECRETARY ROVIRA TO HAVE FOLLOWING REQUEST CONVEYED TO EMBASSY:
1) THAT US IF AT ALL POSSIBLE DELAY DELIVERY OF TANKS TO MOROCCO; OR 2) IF THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE, THAT US GIVE ASSURANCES TO SPAIN THAT MOROCCANS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO USE TANKS IN SAHARA.

2. REPLYING THAT SPANISH REQUEST WOULD OF COURSE BE PASSED TO USG, POL COUNSELOR NOTED THAT SEPTEMBER DELIVERY DATE DISCUSSED EARLIER WAS
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AT BEST APPROXIMATION AND INQUIRED AS TO LENGTH OF

DELAY FONMIN HAD IN MIND. LOPEZ REPLIED THAT FONMIN HAD MENTIONED NO SPECIFIC TIME PERIOD BUT ADDED THAT HE PERSONALLY CONSIDERED THAT DELIVERY ANY TIME WITHIN NEXT TWO TO THREE MONTHS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY INAPPROPRIATE. HE EXPLAINED THAT GOS HAD REPORTS (WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "RUMORS") THAT MOROCCANS INTEND TO STAGE SOME SORT OF MILITARY STRIKE ALONG SOUTHERN FRONTIER DURING RAMADAN, AIMED EITHER AT ALGERIAN FORCES OR INTENDED SEIZE PORTION OF SPANISH SAHARA, THUS PRESENTING SPAIN WITH FAIT ACCOMPLI.

3. COMMENTING ON WHAT GOS SEES AS RISING TENSIONS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA THAT COULD LEAD TO MILITARY ACTION, LOPEZ SAID THERE WERE REPORTS MOROCCAN INVOLVEMENT IN RECENT ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AGAINST BOUMEDIENNE. ALSO CONJECTURED THAT MOROCCO'S SUDDEN EXECUTION OF PLOTTERS AUG 27 AFTER LONG IMPRISONMENT WAS SIGNAL TO ALGERIANS. HE ALSO TOOK NOTE OF ALGERIAN DISPLEASURE OVER PRESENCE OF ABDUL BELCASSIM IN EXILE IN MOROCCO AND SIMILAR MOROCCAN CONCERN OVER REPORTED PRESENCE IN TINDOUF WITH ALGERIAN FORCES CONCENTRATED THERE ONE OR MORE WELL KNOWN MOROCCAN EXILES WHO PARTICIPATED IN PAST PLOTS AGAINST HASSAN. RIVERO

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